

Black Bridge
Spanning the Gunnison River,
on 25.30 Road
Grand Junction
Mesa County
Colorado

HAER No. CO-30-G

HAER
COLO,
39-GRAJU,
2-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
National Park Service
U. S. Department of the Interior
P. O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

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Black Bridge

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Location: Spanning the Gunnison River, on 25.30 Road
Grand Junction, Mesa County, Colorado

UTM: 12.709830.4324675
Quad: Grand Junction

Date of Construction: 1891

Builder/Designer: Kansas City Bridge Company

Present Owner: Mesa County Courthouse
619 East Main
Grand Junction, Colorado

Original Use: Roadway Bridge

Present Use: Abandoned

Significance: The Black Bridge is technologically significant as the longest and tallest Pratt roadway truss remaining in Colorado. It is exceeded in span length by only one other pinned truss in the survey, the Pennsylvania span of the Rifle Bridge (240 feet). Historically, the bridge is significant for several reasons: for decades a pivotal crossing for southwest Colorado, it is the oldest originally-placed vehicular bridge over the Gunnison River; it is the oldest bridge in the county and one of the oldest in the State; and it is the only remaining bridge traceable to the Kansas City Bridge Company, one of the early major midwestern bridge contracting firms. A spectacular early long-span truss, the Black Bridge is one of Colorado's most significant vehicular bridges.

Compilers: Clayton Fraser and Carl Hallberg
Fraserdesign
Loveland, Colorado
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HISTORY

Five years after the completion in 1886 of the first state-funded bridge over the Grand (Colorado) River in Grand Junction, the Mesa County Board of Commissioners began to consider erection of a second major span in the city, over the Gunnison River at the ferry site near its mouth. Bids for construction were let in November 1890. The following January, the contract was awarded to the Kansas City Bridge and Iron Company for \$8,273. Using rolled components manufactured by Carnegie, the bridge company erected this long-span Pratt through truss by August 1891, and the approaches were graded by October. The bridge has been in continuous use since, with only minor deck alterations to its north portal. However, recent damage to its substructure during spring flooding in 1983 has reduced capacity, causing its closing. Its future disposition is now uncertain.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Pin-connected, 11-panel steel Pratt through truss.

Span number	1
Span length:	217' 8"
Overall length:	219' 0"
Overall height:	30' 0"
Clearance height:	14' 10"
Roadway width:	15' 0"
End/top chord:	2 channels with cover and batten plates
Bottom chord:	2 rectangular eyebars
Vertical:	2 sq. eyebars at end panel; 2 channels with lacing
Diagonal:	2 rectangular eyebars; 1 square eyebar with turnbuckle
Floor/decking:	asphalt over corrugated steel deck with steel stringers
Substructure:	ashlar stone abutments

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Structure Inventory and Appraisal: MESA-25.3-B.9. Colorado Department of Highways, Denver, Colorado.

Mesa County Commissioners' Minutes: November 18, 1890 (Book 1, page 444), January 5, 1891 (Book 1, page 445), January 14, 1891 (Book 1, page 449), February 17, 1891 (Book 1, page 453), August 15, 1891 (Book 1, page 474), October 6, 1891 (Book 1, page 478), April 4, 1892 (Book 1, page 504).
Mesa County Courthouse, Grand Junction, Colorado.

Field Inspection by Clayton Fraser and Susan Cason, November 16, 1983.